

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A borderless contact structure comprising:
  - a semiconductor substrate having a top surface;
  - a device isolation region formed in a predetermined region of the semiconductor substrate, the device isolation region having a protrusion that is higher ~~in-level~~ than the top surface of the semiconductor substrate, the protrusion, in cross section, having a sidewall that forms an obtuse angle with the top surface;
  - an impurity diffusion region formed in an active region surrounded by the device isolation region;
  - an etch stop spacer formed overlying ~~a~~ the sidewall of the protrusion;
  - an etch stop layer and an interlayer insulating layer sequentially formed over the resultant structure; and
  - a contact hole opening the interlayer insulating layer and the etch stop layer, the contact hole exposing at least a portion of the impurity diffusion region.
2. (Original) The borderless contact structure according to claim 1, wherein the etch stop spacer is partially etched.
3. (Original) The borderless contact structure according to claim 1, wherein the device isolation region comprises a trench isolation region.
4. (Original) The borderless contact structure according to claim 3, further comprising a thermal oxide layer interposed between the semiconductor substrate and the trench isolation region.
5. (Original) The borderless contact structure according to claim 4, further comprising a silicon nitride liner interposed between the trench isolation region and the thermal oxide layer.
6. (Original) The borderless contact structure according to claim 1, wherein the etch stop spacer comprises silicon nitride or silicon oxynitride.

7. (Original) The borderless contact structure according to claim 1, wherein the etch stop layer comprises silicon nitride or silicon oxynitride.

8. (Original) The borderless contact structure according to claim 1, further comprising an interconnection line filling the contact hole.

9. (Original) The borderless contact structure according to claim 1, further comprising:

- a contact plug filling the contact hole; and
- an interconnection line overlying the contact plug.

10. (Original) The borderless contact structure according to claim 1, wherein the contact hole exposes not only the impurity diffusion region but also a portion of the etch stop spacer adjacent to the exposed impurity diffusion region.

Claims 11-17 cancelled.

18. (New) A semiconductor device, comprising:  
a semiconductor substrate having a top surface;  
a device isolation region formed in a predetermined region of the semiconductor substrate, the device isolation region having a protrusion that is higher than the top surface of the semiconductor substrate, the protrusion, in cross section, having a sidewall that forms an obtuse angle with the top surface;  
an impurity diffusion region formed in an active region surrounded by the device isolation region; and  
an etch stop spacer formed overlying the sidewall of the protrusion.